

Briefing for TCT
on City of Portland Stormwater Outfalls
Source Investigation and Control Project

Objectives:

1. To provide information to the TCT partners on the progress and proposed decision format for completion of the City of Portland's investigation of potential contaminant sources to the municipal stormwater conveyance system that discharges through 39 outfalls to Portland Harbor.
2. To offer an opportunity for TCT partners to provide input on the process and proposed decision format.

Background:

The City of Portland started investigating discharges from their outfalls into Portland Harbor prior to the 2000 listing as a Superfund Site. By 2000, the City had published a two-volume preliminary evaluation of the 20 outfalls in the initials study area and began documenting investigative work in two pilot basins, M-1 on Swan Island and 18 in the heart of the Westside industrial district, in reports through 2004. The pilot study work prompted a 2003 intergovernmental agreement between DEQ and the City of Portland for a cooperative approach to evaluating and controlling potential upland sources to the City conveyance system that might adversely affect sediment and surface water quality in Portland Harbor. A programmatic work plan for remedial investigation of all City outfalls discharging to the harbor was developed in 2004, which has been expanded as the project area expanded. Work has been conducted with DEQ oversight and includes: 1) in-river sediment investigation at many outfalls; 2) source tracing and identification; 3) discovery of sites that were subsequently asked to join DEQ's voluntary cleanup program for source control; and 4) implementation of control measures through on-going refinement of DEQ and City programs. In support of the work, approximately 54 reports and technical memos have been prepared and submitted on basin-specific information along with 17 multi-basin or harbor-wide reports and quarterly progress reports, all of which can be made available for partner review. The most notable controls have come through source identification and subsequent cleanup through DEQ's program and completion of the combined sewerage overflow diversions in 2011, which addressed discharges at 35 outfalls and reduced the annual volume of stormwater and sewerage discharges to the Willamette River by 94%.

In the realm of source control under the Joint Source Control Strategy, the City Outfalls Project is unique in a couple of ways. Firstly, while ranked as a high priority site in DEQ's Milestone Reports, it is not a traditional single-site facility with various pathways for migration of contamination produced at the site to the river. Rather, the 39 outfalls span the entire ~10 mile reach of the project area and drain about half of the nearly 14,000 acres of open space, residential, commercial, major transportation and industrial sites throughout the project area uplands. The wide areal span of the stormwater conveyance system and complex intertwining of potentially contaminated facility discharges warranted the ranking as a high priority. Secondly, the submission of data and information generated during the 12 years of investigation work is voluminous.

Status:

Having completed investigations as specified in the source control work plan, the City is currently preparing a “programmatic” report summarizing the remedial investigation approach and covering all City programs that address stormwater source control and how these apply in Portland Harbor. The report will include appendices summarizing source investigation and control activities completed in each outfall basin, to demonstrate that sources have been identified and source control mechanisms are in place for all identified sources. These report components will refer to the detailed source investigation reports and technical memos prepared and submitted by the City over the past 12 years.

From this information, DEQ anticipates crafting a source control decision memo for review by EPA and the TCT partners, per the Joint Source Control Strategy.

Timeframe:

The City provided DEQ with working drafts of a few basin summary reports that represent a range of simple basins to more complex. DEQ anticipates iterative submittal and review of the overarching programmatic stormwater source control report over the next several months with submittal of the final products by spring/summer 2013.

DEQ anticipates drafting the source control decision memo for submittal to EPA and the TCT by summer/fall 2013.

The City’s report will greatly inform DEQ’s source control summary report to EPA and the TCT. The focus of DEQ’s summary report will be on the potential for upland sources to recontaminate the project area following implementation of the in-water remedy(s). Submittal of DEQ’s summary report is targeted for fall/winter 2013 for consideration by EPA in preparation of the Proposed Plan.